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Gas-Engine Mike

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But she found herself very much alone, still quietly tucked behind the corner, trying to assemble some way of dealing with the intruders, the boys.

Embittered and angry, she stepped forth from the corner, her resolution suddenly hardened by acrimony; if He wouldn't or couldn't do it, then she must. Trembling, her feet barely trustworthy, she made her way to the door, stood momentarily but an arm's length from the boy on the floor, then backed away and stepped up on the first step to the sanctuary.

The boys, their minds and sense totally occupied with what seemed the end of their quest, never noted her appearance. She had come as if out of nowhere, and when she let out a piercing female scream, fright turned them still where they stood.

"Don't turn around," she said immediately. "The police are all around the church, boys." Her voice reached low and deep. "Don't try to run. Your only way of getting out of this is with me." The boys stood perfectly still, stunned by the unexpected.

She hadn't the words to proceed. All of her inventiveness failed to conjure any way out of this. In the darkness she pulled both hands together and pointed them forward as if she were aiming a handgun. "Don't turn around. I've got you covered." It was a terrible line and she knew it the moment it was out. These kids probably saw as many John Waynes as she had.

"Now I want to know who it is you're working for—that's question number one, you hear?" Her voice broke into a shrieking clarinet. It struck her the question was apt. Colombo would have asked it.

Gas-Engine Mike

In overalls,

He tends three

Antique gas engines,

Shuffles from one

To the next

With a slick can of oil

And a rag.

The motors (for their part)

Hiss and pop at each other,

Arguing about who is

Oldest,

Strongest,

Or has the largest flywheel.

The old man

Could answer all those questions,

But he pushes back his cap,

Prefers to let the engines do the talking.

Robert J. De Smith—